**Component #1: Needs, Goals & Objectives**

**Title of Group Program: Overcoming Test Taking Anxiety**

1)  Student identifies two existing data sources and one other approach for assessing student needs and describes how these data sources will be analyzed in order to identify needs and gaps in achievement.

**Rationale/Need Statement:**

Test taking anxiety is an ever-present issue with students today. This group has been developed to reach students most affected by test taking anxiety. A document analysis of grades of 10th grade students at Salem High School revealed that 20% of students do not have a passing grade point average. In addition, a survey of 10th grade teachers at the school revealed that 92% of teachers are concerned about the long term effects of test taking anxiety on students. Additionally, recenter research has indicated that more than 33% of U.S. elementary and secondary students experience som test anxiety.  This comes as no surprise considering the emphasis that is placed on standardized testing in the field of education today. And as demands and pressures are placed on students to achieve higher test scores, the need for school counselors to implement interventions to help reduce anxiety increases (Cheek, et. al, 2002).

**Description of Needs Assessment:**

Group members were chosen based on the needs assessment conducted. This included gathering necessary information such as student grades, interviews with teachers, and classroom observation. It was determined that there is both a normative and felt need present. There is a normative need present because students selected for the group have below average test scores for their high school's grade level. The felt need was determined after the school counselor was able to sit in on some classes and see student behaviors during test time. Therefore, recommendations for the five group members chosen were based on a combination of their grades, teacher reviews, and observation of behaviors by the school counselor.

2) Student develops one overarching goal for the group program based on identified need; the goal aligns with the academic mission of schools.

**Goal:** To empower students to reduce test taking anxiety while increasing academic achievement.

3)  Student develops **two** measurable objectives for session #2 of the structured group program that supports the established goal (**one** school counseling content and **one** mathematics content).

**School Counseling** - Students will be able to list five methods used for reducing test taking anxiety.

**Mathematics** - Students will be able to graph levels of test taking anxiety with at least 80% accuracy.

4)  Student develops **two** measurable objectives for session #1 of the structured group program that supports the established goal (**one** school counseling content and **one** language arts content).

**School Counseling** - Given a list of test dates and topics, students will develop an appropriate study plan for each test.

**Language Arts** - After watching a video on test taking anxiety, students will summarize the information in one paragraph within 10 mintues.

5)  Student briefly describes the importance of data-driven, needs-based programming that clearly aligns professional school counseling with the mission of schools.

The assessment of students' counseling needs is an integral componenet of development and implementation of an effective school counseling program is widely recognized. Unfortunately, this mandate has been hindered by lack of a psychometrically sound measure of students; counseling needs (Thompson, Loesch, & Seraphine, 2003). This is why it is always important to have data-driven, needs-based programming that clearly aligns both school counseling and academic standards. Developing programs based on data and needs assessment provides for the most cost- and time-effective counseling groups which provide the most comprehensive form of school counseling while meeting school goals as well.

**Component #2: Research- Supported and Standards-Based Content**

1)  Student provides step-by-step process and activities to be covered in session #1 (research support for theoretical orientation and techniques required from at least one scholarly peer reviewed counseling journal, preferably ASCA’s journal, *Professional School Counseling*. Cite/attach handouts to be used.

**Title of Session #1:** Preparing for Test Time

**Brief Summary of Session:** During this initial session which is in the initial phase, students will be introduced to the counselor, fellow students, topic, and group process. Group rules, including confidentiality, are discussed. To begin students will complete the Test Anxiety Exposure Hierarchy. Results and student responses will be discuess within the group. This will lead into discussion of effective ways of reducing test taking anxiety.

**Theoretical Orientation:** This psychoeducational group is primarily based on the person-centered theory which is a non-directive form of talk therapy that is one of the most widely used approaches in psychotherapy today. According to Schottelkorb and Ray (2009), person-centered therapy has been shown to be an effective method for group school counseling. The behavioral group approach will also be utilized. This orientation focuses on helping students learn life skills and address specific present, as well as future, problems through an emphasis on self-management skills (Erford, 2010).

**Specific Group Technique:** Most of the various techniques of the person-centered orientation will be used in this group session, including reflective feelings, active listening, non-directive counseling, and paraphrasing. Behavioral rehearsal and shaping may also be utilized within the group.

**Structure:** This psychoeducational group is a closed group that will include 6 sessions over the course of six weeks. The group will meet for 30 minutes every Wednesday from 11-11:30am in a meeting room within the school counseling office. The group will be offered twice a year.

**Materials/ Media:** pencils, paper, and a clock (timer).

**Objectives (2):**

-          Students will be able to graph levels of test taking anxiety with at least 80% accuracy.

-          Students will be able to list five methods used for reducing test taking anxiety.

**Assessments:** Test Anxiety Exposure Hierarchy worksheet with graph; and completion of list

**Procedures/ Instructional Strategy:**

1.      Introductions – school counselor, fellow students, topic, and group process

2.      Go over group rules and discuss confidentiality agreement and informed consent

3.       Have students complete Pre-Post Test

4.      Introduce Session 1 Topic – Preparing for Test Time and group goal – “To reduce test taking anxiety while increasing academic achievement.”

5.      Discuss group goal

6.      Have students complete the Test Anxiety Exposure Hierarchy and graph

7.      Discuss worksheet completed

8.      Discuss ways of reducing test taking anxiety

9.      Have students complete a list of 5 of their favorite ways of reducing test taking anxiety and briefly discuss

10.    Have students complete Pre-Post Test

11.  Close out the session with a review of all the benefits of proper test preparation

**Homework/ Ownwork:** Ask students to be practicing these techniques at home and in their classes. Advise them that at the beginning of our next session we will discuss how these changes have impacted them.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:** There are always issues that can arise in group counseling settings. In this particular group a primary concern would be early termination due to student’s lack of desire to be there (if they were recommended to the group by a parent or teacher) or the put in the effort required to see results. While the group is currently in the initial stage of orientation and exploration, some students may find issues with the division of responsibility and group structuring. Trust may also be a primary concern this early on in the group process.

 2) Student provides step-by-step process and activities to be covered in session #2 (research support for theoretical orientation and techniques required from at least one scholarly peer reviewed counseling journal, preferably ASCA’s journal, *Professional School Counseling*. Cite/attach handouts to be used.

**Title of Session #2:** Managing Test Stress

**Brief Summary of Session:** Session Two will begin with a review of Session 1 and any questions or comments group members may have. The group will watch a short video on test taking anxiety. Students will then write a one page summary on information learned from the video within a 10 minute time frame. The class will discuss any new information learned, and primarily the emphasis the video placed on test preparation methods such as study plans. Given a list of test dates and topics, students will develop a study plan. The session will end with a review in the form of a class discussion.

**Theoretical Orientation:** This psychoeducational group is primarily based on the person-centered theory which is a non-directive form of talk therapy that is one of the most widely used approaches in psychotherapy today. According to Schottelkorb and Ray (2009), person-centered therapy has been shown to be an effective method for group school counseling. The behavioral group approach will also be utilized. This orientation focuses on helping students learn life skills and address specific present, as well as future, problems through an emphasis on self-management skills (Erford, 2010).

**Specific Group Technique:** Most of the various techniques of the person-centered orientation will be used in this group session, including reflective feelings, active listening, non-directive counseling, and paraphrasing. Behavioral rehearsal and shaping may also be utilized within the group.

**Structure:** This psychoeducational group is a closed group that is in its second, of six sessions set up to meet every Wednesday from 11-11:30am for 6 weeks. The group is currently still in the initial stage but should be moving on to the working stage in this session.

**Materials/ Media:** Video, paper, pencil, clock (timer) and example test dates list.

**Objectives (2):**

-          After watching a video on test taking anxiety, students will summarize the information in one page within 10 minutes.

-          Given a list of test dates and topics, students will develop an appropriate study plan for each test.

**Assessments:** video summary and student study plan

**Procedures/ Instructional Strategy:**

1.      Review of Session 1 and homework; have students complete Pre-Post Test

2.      Introduction of Session 2 topic – Managing Test Stress

3.      Play video for class about managing test anxiety

4.      Review the video with the class

5.      Have students write a one page summary of the video within a 10 minute time frame

6.      Introduce topic of study plans

7.      Have students complete a study plan

8.      Have students complete Pre-Post Test

8.      Discuss homework and close group session

**Homework/ Ownwork:** Have each student develop a study plan for their own personal school test schedule. This does not need to be turned in at the next meeting, as this is for students to use to benefit them outside the group setting.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:** The group is still considered to be in the initial stage of orientation and exploration. Student members are still gaining trust with one another working towards developing group cohesion. Students may still have reservations about what information they share with the group and their level of interaction.

 3)  Student identifies ASCA Standards and core academic standards covered in Session #1 and Session #2.

**Session #1 Standards:**

**Core ASCA Standard(s):** A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning.

A:A2.4 Apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance.

**Core State Academic Standard(s):** A.6 The student will graph linear equations and linear inequalities in two variables.

A.7 The student will investigate and analyze function (linear and quadratic) families and their characteristics both algebraically and graphically.

**Session #2 Standards:**

**Core ASCA Standard(s):** A:B2.1 Establish challenging academic goals in elementary, middle/junior high and high school.

A:B2.6 Understand the relationship between classroom performance and success in school.

**Core State Academic Standard(s):** 10.1b The student will participate in the preparation of an outline or summary of a group activity.

10.7 The student will develop a variety of writing, with an emphasis on exposition.

10.10 The student will use writing to interpret, analyze, and evaluate ideas.

 4)  Student discusses the importance of supporting theoretical orientations and techniques in school counseling prevention and intervention programs.

Supporting theoretical orientations and techniques in school counseling prevention and intervention programs are quite important. Theoretical orientations and techniques are the cornerstone of adequate school counseling and prevention programs. If an appropriate theoretical orientation or technique is not used, the program will not be appropriately formatted and therefore, not as effective with student members. On the other hand, utilization of the most appropriate theoretical orientation and techniques will provide a most effective outcome which will allow students to gain the most from the group setting.

**Component #3: Ethical, Legal, Multicultural**

1)  Student identifies ethical and legal considerations in group work with minors in the schools and those specific to this group program.

There are various ethical and legal considerations in group work that should be addressed in any group program. Corey (2012) identified the following as primary ethical issues in group practice: rights of group members, including personal relationships with clients; socializing among members; the impact of the group leader's values; working effectively and ethical with diverse clients; and the uses and misuses of group techniques. This is why it is so important that school counselors be competent in their skill set and always participate in continuing education. With an ever-increasing culturally diverse population, it is important school counselors be well educated on the topic to ensure ethical practices. It is also important that school counselors adhere to ethical standards and laws such as the ever-important topic of confidentiality. Continuous assessment of group practices is one way that the leader of this group program will work to provide the most appropriate ethical and legal process. Additionally, confidentiality is a primary consideration in working in this particular group program. Group facilitator should also consider the cultural aspects of the group population.

 2)  Student creates a signed consent form to be distributed to parents of students prior to participation in group counseling to include limits to confidentiality in group work (attach as a supplemental form in LiveText for this section).

 3) Student identifies how the group program is culturally sensitive, describes how issues of conflict, bias, prejudice, oppression, and discrimination are to be addressed during group, and identifies strategies included in the group program that promote a positive, caring, and safe learning group environments.

This group program was developed with cultural sensitivity in mind. The group leader will be self-aware to ensure an understanding of how his/her own culture influences the way you think, feel, and act. Methods and strategies for the group will be developed with the life experiences and cultural values of group members in mind. The group counselor will be flexible in their methods to accomodate various student cultures. Group members are not forced to fit in to certain counseling approaches that do not fit their cultural beliefs. Additionally the school counselor will consult with colleagues when necessary to provide the best possible group atmosphere for all participants. The program will emphasize cultural empathy to help with student comfort levels in the group.

4) Student discusses the importance of carefully considering issues related to ethics, legal, professional, and cultural significance in the group process from making group opportunities available and member selection to group termination.

Group members were selected after careful consideration and review of various sources such as student reports or grades. Teacher referral and school counselor observations also contributed to student selection decisions. This group is for 10th grade male and female students with test taking anxiety. Students were selected based on the overall outcome of their grades and behavior at test time. This group should prove to be most beneficial to the members selected because it was built around the needs assessment given.

**Component #4: Program Evaluation**

1)  Student creates a pre-post measure for session #1 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).

2)  Student creates a pre-post measure for session #2 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).

3)  Student briefly describes the importance of program evaluation and outcome-driven programming in professional school counseling.

Program evaluation and outcome-driven programming is quite important in professional school counseling. Outcome-driven programming is so important because it allows for the program to be measureable. Program aspects such as goals and objectives are integral part, and must be measureable so as to gage the level of success for the group program. Outcome-driven programming and evaluation help you to see what aspects of the group dynamic were effective and what would need to be changed to better benefit all participants. Evaluation is important to determine how everyone was affected by the group. It is important to evaluate whether goals and objectives have been met and if procedures were followed appropriately.

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